

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 /099 W

-----070839Z 094300 /20

P R 070750Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7607

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1309

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, SS, MR, MO, AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: CONTINUING POLISARIO MILITARY SUCCESSES

1. IN FIRST KNOWN MILITARY ACTIVITY SINCE MAY 1 STRIKE AGAINST ZOUERATE, POLISARIO WENT ON OFFENSIVE MAY 30 WITH ATTACKS IN FORMER SPANISH SAHARA AT AUSERT (22 35N 14 18W) AND AT BOU CRAA PHOSPHATE FACILITIES.

2. FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE REPORTS THAT POLISARIO SUCCESSFULLY ATTACKED MAURITANIAN MILITARY GARRISON SOUTH OF AUSERT MEETING ONLY TOKEN RESISTANCE AND DISAPPEARING INTO DESERT WITH INSIGNIFICANT LOSSES. ESTIMATED FORCE OF 60 POLISARIO TROOPS IN 10 LANDROVERS STRUCK AUSERT GARRISON EARLY MORNING OF MAY 30. AFTER
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INITIAL MORTAR BARRAGE LASTING ROUGHLY HALF HOUR, POLISARIO UNITS ADVANCED WITHIN RANGE OF GIRM DEFENSIVE PERIMETER AND OPENED FIRE WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND HAND GRENADES. ALTHOUGH PRECISE MAURITANIAN CASUALTY FIGURE IS NOT KNOWN, FRENCH MILITARY DOCTOR ASSIGNED TO PRINCIPAL HOSPITAL IN NOUAKCHOTT REPORTS HAVING PROVIDED MEDICAL CARE FOR 7 SERIOUSLY WOUNDED GIRM TROOPS AS RESULT OF AUSERT ATTACK. ASSAULT LASTED

APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS; POLISARIO SUBSEQUENTLY DISENGAGED AND DISAPPEARED INTO DESERT WITH ONLY MINIMUM OF RESPONSE ON PART OF MAURITANIANS. BOTH SPANISH AND FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHES FOUND IT NOTEWORTHY THAT POLISARIO ATTACKED STRICTLY MILITARY TARGET AND LEFT CIVILIAN POPULATION OF AUSERT ALONE. WE KNOW OF NO GIRM SUCCESSES IN LOCATING POLISARIO UNITS WHICH ATTACKED AUSERT.

3. ALSO ON MAY 30, ACCORDING TO SPANISH MILITARY ATTACHE, POLISARIO FORCE OF UNKNOWN SIZE ATTACKED AND DESTROYED SEVERAL TRUCKS BEING USED BY MOROCCANS TO TRANSPORT PHOSPHATES FROM BOU CRAA MINES TO SHIPPING FACILITIES ON ATLANTIC COAST. SPANISH ATTACHE REPORTS ATTACK LEFT ONE SPANIARD DEAD AND ONE WOUNDED SEVERELY ENOUGH TO REQUIRE MEDIVAC TO MADRID. SPANIARD SAID HIS EMBASSY HAD BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PROCESSING PAPERWORK COVERING SPANISH CITIZEN KILLED AND SECOND SEVERELY WOUNDED IN ATTACK. ACCORDING TO ACCOUNT RECEIVED BY LOCAL SPANISH EMBASSY, POLISARIO BEGAN ATTACK WITH DIVERSIONARY STRIKE AGAINST CONVEYOR BELT WITH FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENT OF MAIN FORCE AGAINST LOADED TRUKS DRIVEN MOSTLY BY SPANIARDS. SPANIARD HAD NO INDICATION THAT POLISARIO FORCE WASHOFFECTIVELY ENGAGED BY MOROCCAN MILITARY, AND COMMENTED THAT ATTACK FORCE APPARENTLY DISAPPEARED INTO DESERT AFTER DISENGAGING AT TIME OF ITS OWN CHOOSING. HANDYSIDE

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Sent Date: 07-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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